

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

creating a plurality of auction profiles, each of said plurality of auction profiles

including a subset of rules from a plurality of auction rules; and

assigning one of said plurality of auction profiles to an auction object.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the auction rules control display of information
to a plurality of bidders.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the information to display to a plurality of
bidders comprises at least one of reserve price, rank, best bid, next bid value, first place flag,
my bid, hide until first valid bid, company name bid history, price bid history, date/time bid
history, show competitor's bids history, extension information, number of invited bidders, user
name bid history, bid chart, bid volume chart, best bid by bidder chart, send chat, company best
bid, overall best bid, bidder best bid, and bid validation.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

conducting an auction based on said auction object.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said assigning is performed at an initiator site.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

at one or more bidder sites, displaying a graphical user interface having a configuration including display objects dictated by the auction rules.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein creating a plurality of auction profiles comprises selecting a subset of rules from a plurality of pre-configured auction rules.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein assigning one of said plurality of auction profiles to an auction object comprises selecting an auction profile from among a plurality of pre-configured auction profiles.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein the plurality of pre-configured auction profiles comprise English, rank-only, blind, and English company best bid.
10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

modifying an auction profile before the auction begins.
11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

modifying an auction profile during the auction.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein the auction rules comprise bid validation rules.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the bid validation rule shows bid details only after a first acceptable bid is received.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the bid validation rule allows multiple bidders from a company to bid in the same auction and validates each bid by checking whether the bid is lower than the current lowest bid of the bids by bidders within the company.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein the bid validation rule allows multiple bidders from a company to bid in the same auction as individual competitors, and validates a bidder's bid by checking whether the bid is lower than the current lowest bid of the bidder.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein the bid validation rule forces each bidder to submit a bid that is lower than a current lowest bid for a line item.

17. A networked computer system comprising:
an initiator site operative to create an auction profile;
a server operative to host an online auction corresponding to the auction profile; and
a plurality of supplier sites operative to transmit bids to the auction site during the auction.

18. The networked computer system of claim 17, wherein the auction profile comprises rules that control display of information to a plurality of bidders for an online

auction.

19. The networked computer system of claim 18, wherein the information to display to a plurality of bidders comprises at least one of reserve price, rank, best bid, next bid value, first place flag, my bid, hide until first valid bid, company name bid history, price bid history, date/time bid history, show competitor's bids history, extension information, number of invited bidders, user name bid history, bid chart, bid volume chart, best bid by bidder chart, send chat, company best bid, overall best bid, bidder best bid, and bid validation.

20. The networked computer system of claim 17, wherein the initiator site allows a user to create an auction profile by selecting a subset of rules from a plurality of pre-configured auction rules.

21. The networked computer system of claim 17, wherein the initiator site allows a user to select an auction profile from among a plurality of pre-configured auction profiles, each auction profile comprising a pre-configured set of auction rules that control display of information to a plurality of bidders for an auction.

22. The networked computer system of claim 21, wherein the plurality of pre-configured auction profiles comprise English, rank-only, blind, and English company best bid.

23. The networked computer system of claim 17, wherein the initiator site allows a

user to modify an auction profile before the auction begins.

24. The networked computer system of claim 17, wherein the initiator site allows a user to modify an auction profile during the auction.

25. The networked computer system of claim 17, wherein the set of auction rules comprise a bid validation rule.

26. The networked computer system of claim 25, wherein the bid validation rule shows bid details only after a first acceptable bid is received.

27. The networked computer system of claim 25, wherein the bid validation rule allows multiple bidders from a company to bid in the same auction and validates each bid by checking whether the bid is lower than the current lowest bid of the bids by bidders within the company.

28. The networked computer system of claim 25, wherein the bid validation rule allows multiple bidders from a company to bid in the same auction as individual competitors, and validates a bidder's bid by checking whether the bid is lower than the current lowest bid of the bidder.

29. The networked computer system of claim 25, wherein the bid validation rule

forces each bidder to submit a bid that is lower than a current lowest bid for a line item.